

**PAGES • FROM  
PARTY • HISTORY**  
**BY • JAY • LOVESTONE**



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CHAPTER I

THE RECENT PARTY DISCUSSION

After the recent long Party discussion, it is not only appropriate but necessary to draw certain conclusions from the examination of policies, to estimate our Party's tasks, to trace its development, to examine the perspectives for its immediate future.

It is now nearly ten years that our Party is in existence. The writer recalls the beginnings of and some of the experiences in the Socialist Propaganda League in the old Socialist Party. In this organization, which was the first near-Bolshevik crystallization, there participated a number of comrades some of whom are now holding the highest posts in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, in the Russian Trade Unions and in the Soviet Government. Our experiences in the organization of the 1917-1919 Socialist Party left wing, the forerunner of our Party of today, in such cities as Cleveland, led by Comrade Ruthenberg, as Boston, led by Comrade Ballam, as New York, led by such comrades as Gitlow, Weinstone, Wolfe and Reed, are of great value to us at this moment not only in aiding us to secure a better understanding of our immediate problems and a correction of our errors, but also in helping us arrive at the best ways and means of insuring an acceleration of the Party's growth in influence and power.

Our trials and errors in the pre-communist Party days, our fierce factional struggles in the early underground days of our Party, have been harmful in certain respects but have also served constructively as a sort of sieve not only for the Party leadership but also for the Party membership. Those of our Party leadership and membership who have gone through these periods will vouch for this. The same applies also to the more recent struggles in our Party ranks.

LENINIST ATTITUDE ON PARTY MISTAKES

Some comrades might state that we have admitted too many mistakes, we have exposed our weaknesses too much in the open; or that we have been too sharp with each other. First of all, we must emphasize to such comrades that differences are in order in a Communist Party, provided they do not degenerate into quarrels. Secondly, sharpness in formulation of principle is not a liability but an

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asset. This has been the position of Comrade Lenin, emphasized by him time and again.

More than that, Comrade Lenin has thus stated the correct attitude towards the Party and its mistakes:

"The attitude of a political party towards its mistakes is one of the surest and most important tests of its seriousness and of its ability to discharge its duties towards its class and the laboring masses. To recognize a mistake openly, to find out its causes, to analyze the situation which occasioned it, to examine carefully the means of repairing it—this is the mark of a serious party, that is what in the case of a party is called one's duty, educating the class and so the masses." (*Left-wing Communism.*)

Our Party accepts this yard-stick of Lenin.

And Comrade Lenin even went further when he said:

"They (the opponents of Marxism) are overjoyed at the sight of our discussions. They will attempt to exploit for their own ends certain passages of this book devoted to the mistakes and shortcomings of our Party. The Russian Marxists are already sufficiently steeled in battle not to let themselves be troubled by these pin pricks, to continue their task of self-criticism and of merciless exposure of their own defects, which will inevitably disappear as the working-class movement is strengthened." (*Lenin-One Step Forward*, 1904)

Hence the Trotsky clique does what it pleases about our open admission of errors. Our discussion is primarily constructive. Let the *Volkszeitung*, its German mouthpiece, sneer. Let its ally, the corrupt, reactionary Jewish Daily Forward attempt to capitalize our admission of errors and the apparent, momentary friction in our ranks. The coming Party convention will mark a period of new strength, of new activities and the beginning of greater influence for our Party. The coming Party convention will be a milestone in the life of our Party, which is completing its turning point from a propagandist organization binding together chiefly foreign immigrant workers and having practically no influence among the native workers, into a Party of political action guiding all political and economic actions of decisive sections of the American proletariat—the great mass of semi-skilled and unskilled workers.

#### FEATURES OF THE PRESENT DISCUSSION

There were six main features characterizing the recent Party discussion. These were:

(1) *The genuine, keen interest of the membership as a whole.* Approximately seven thousand Party members participated in voting in the units for convention delegates. This is a high proportion of our good-standing membership. It is the highest proportion re-

corded—greater absolutely as well as relatively even than the proportion of our membership which participated in the 1924-25 Party discussion. This is a sign of the healthy development of our Party.

(2) *The level of discussion was the highest we have reached.* Fundamental problems have been raised and examined with a welcome earnestness. This is true despite serious shortcomings in various sections of the Party, in certain districts.

(3) *A strong, broad support for the Central Committee.* At least 80 per cent of those participating in the voting in the units cast their support for the Central Committee of the Party. The present Central Committee has a far greater basis of support than any of its predecessors. In fact the present Central Committee has amongst the broadest bases of support to be found for Central Committees in the various sections of the Comintern. This is an index of the growth of the stability of our Party. This phenomenon is fortunately not limited to any particular district or number of districts, but is noticeable throughout the Party, in every district of the Party.

(4) *The backbone of the support of the Central Committee is the most proletarian section of our Party.* Here the proportion of the membership supporting the C. E. C. is even greater than in the country as a whole. The proletarian heart of our Party is to be found in the industrial triangle of Pittsburgh, Cleveland and Detroit. The unit votes here indicate the following:

	For the C.E.C.	For the Opposition	Percentage for C.E.C.
Pittsburgh	292	55	84%
Cleveland	375	71	84%
Detroit	262	56	82%

In the anthracite sub-district, the coal miners voted unanimously for the Central Committee. On the Iron Range the metal miners voted 107 to 1 for the Central Committee. On the Copper Range 165 against 0 for the Central Committee. In the Ohio coal fields 115 to 0 for the Central Committee. In the soft coal fields of western Pennsylvania and Illinois, the vote was practically unanimous for the Central Committee. The same holds true for the New Bedford textile workers in our Party. The Central Committee secured a decisive majority amongst the Party members in the rubber centers, the packing house nuclei, the railroad nuclei and the shop nuclei in the automobile factories.



(5) *The Party has taken seriously and responded energetically to the call of the 6th World Congress of the Comintern for proletarianization of its ranks and leadership.* It is already clear that about 70 per cent of those elected as delegates to the National Convention are workers in the factories, now at the bench, now in the mill or mine. More than that, at least 90 per cent of the national convention delegates are proletarian in character. The newly elected district executive committees are on an equal plane of proletarian composition. Let no comrade boast. Let no comrade slow down in his efforts to help proletarianize our Party in a true Bolshevik sense. We still have a long way to go, but we have made a substantial start. The social composition of the national convention and the various district and section conventions, as well as of the newly elected district committees, are proof of that. We are sure that the incoming Central Committee will likewise reflect a tremendous improvement in the social composition.

(6) *The results in the Party elections cannot in any way at all be taken as a victory of any group or combination of groups.* In fact, the elections are only an index of the extent to which the Party has already advanced in liquidating all groups and smashing all group lines, in wiping out all existing factions. For instance, recent weeks have witnessed a marked trend of former supporters of the Opposition to the ranks of the Central Committee. An outstanding example of this force for Party unification is to be found in the fact that only the other day, Comrade Ella Reeve Bloor, for many years an ardent adherent of the Opposition, one of the veterans of our Party and in the labor movement as a whole, has broken with the Opposition and has called upon Foster to stop the factional struggle and to support the C. E. C. Every district shows this trend towards wiping out the old factional lines, towards the breaking down of groups, to be accelerating.

#### MAIN TASKS BEFORE OUR PARTY

The two main tasks before the Party are:

- (1) To conduct a vigorous fight against the right danger;
- (2) To liquidate factionalism and smash all existing groups in the Party.

But to prepare the comrades to realize these tasks, to understand the why and wherefore of such tasks, it is necessary, amongst other prerequisites, to review historically, first, the various periods in the development of our Party and, second, the line of the Communist International towards our Party.

The course of the development of our Party—its ups and downs, its inner conflicts, its defeats and successes, its mistakes and shortcomings—is no accident, is no series of accidents. All of these developments and results are deeply rooted in the objective conditions under which we have been working—in the divisions within the ranks of the working class (foreign-born and native, skilled and unskilled, Negro and white, etc), in the dominant world position of American imperialism, etc. Nor has the line of the Comintern towards our Party been an accident or a series of accidents.

### THREE MAIN PERIODS OF OUR PARTY

#### THE PERIOD OF ULTRA-LEFTISM

Those comrades who have been in the Party from its inception know that in the first days of our existence as a Party we were ultra-left sick. I still recall how we called for armed insurrection and the setting up of Soviets during the course of a trolley-car strike in Brooklyn. I remember how in 1919 we asked for the formation of Soviets along the water front during the course of a longshoremen's strike in New York. Many a Party document came from the pen of the writer utilizing the slogan of armed insurrection under conditions when it did not have the least content, the slightest substance. Some comrades will recall the trade-union policy of our Party in 1919-20 based on principle objections to working within the existing labor unions because they were reactionary.

Some of us might even recall the sharp differences in our ranks in 1921 over the question of how to fight the ultra-left. For instance, comrades will recollect how the Party leadership in 1921 came near being smashed to smithereens in defeating the proposal of Cannon to expel five thousand workers from our Party because they responded too slowly to our efforts for organizing an open Party. Let no one laugh at the fact that the same renegade Cannon now poses as a pure left-wing communist. Comrades might even go back a little further and recall the role of Comrade Wagenknecht at the national left-wing conference held in New York in June, 1919—his hesitation, his wavering on the fundamental principle of splitting the Socialist Party.

To the superficial observer it might be difficult to understand how it comes about that Mr. Cannon and Comrade Wagenknecht,



regardless of what else they disagree over, are agreed upon one point; namely, that the present Party leadership is a right-wing leadership and that they, Cannon and Wagenknecht, are left, pure communists. Really, for Cannon and those associated with him in his Trotsky group and for Wagenknecht and those associated with him in the Opposition to call the present leadership a right-wing leadership is enough to make a horse laugh.

#### B.—THE PERIOD OF RIGHT WING ORIENTATION—FROM THE 3RD TO THE 4TH CONVENTION

The present Opposition came into fortunately short-lived leadership of the Party at the December, 1923, convention through an alliance with Ludwig Lore, editor of the New York Volkszeitung, and with the dominant leadership of the Finnish Federation, most of whom are now expelled from the Party along with Lore as right wingers and Trotskyists. This period is marked by a deep swing to the right in the policies of the Party. The Party was reeking with opportunism. We will cite here merely a few of the outstanding examples of the dangerous right-wing path that the Party was pursuing when the present Opposition constituted the leadership—Foster-Cannon-Bittelman-Lore:

(1) Endorsement of labor banking. Today we are unanimous in denouncing labor banking as one of the vilest manifestations of class collaboration, as a proof of the corruption of the labor aristocracy. Hard as it might be for comrades to believe, the Labor Herald (the predecessor of Labor Unity), official organ of the Trade Union Educational League, edited by Foster, once editorially endorsed labor banking.

(2) The convention which gave birth to the Foster-Bittelman-Cannon-Lore group as the leadership of the Party (1923) adopted a resolution by a majority vote asking the Comintern to reconsider its instruction to our Party to reorganize the Party on the basis of shop nuclei.

(3) When this (1923) convention was over Mr. Lore proudly exclaimed in the editorial columns of the Volkszeitung that the victory of the Foster majority was a victory for Trotskyism. All the efforts of the comrades in the present majority, then in the minority on the C. E. C., to secure a repudiation, by the then majority (present Opposition) and their associates, of this proud boast of Lore, failed.

(4) All our efforts to secure a repudiation of Trotskyism by the Foster-Bittelman-Cannon-Lore C. E. C. of 1924-25 were

defeated. It was not until the Party's representative to the Comintern cabled instructions to the C. E. C. during the Fifth World Congress to repudiate Trotskyism that the then C. E. C., dominated by the present Opposition, came out against Trotskyism.

(5) During this period the Party's trade-union work was based solely on the organized skilled workers. Amalgamation was the sole slogan. The viewpoint of the present Opposition for a labor party was so limited and narrow in its contents as to lead Foster to advocate the organization of a labor party only as a means of securing the undoing of Gompers. When the comrades constituting a decisive section of the present majority of the C. E. C. raised the issue of organizing the unorganized, they were then denounced by the present Opposition as dual unionists and splitters.

(6) Lore, now expelled as a renegade, was the real ideological leader of the present Opposition when it was the majority. An analysis of the Central Committee voting records of 1924-25 shows this to be the case. This was proven to the Comintern in 1925.

(7) The Commission of the Fifth Congress to handle the American question instructed the present Opposition, when it was the majority, to break with Lore and to unite with the followers of Rubenberg. Yet at the St. Paul convention, June, 1924, after this C. I. decision, the present Opposition and its followers joined hands with Lore for a united front against the then Rubenberg minority.

(8) This American Commission further declared that:

"The comrades gathered around Comrades Hathaway and Cannon have made a number of declarations which show that in their efforts to secure influence on the petit-bourgeoisie, they failed to maintain the Communist position."

(9) Then there was the rank opportunist policy on the Negro question. Notice the speech of Comrade Dunne at the Third Pro-fintern Congress giving the official position of the Party (1924) on the Negro question:

"That the black workers are not organized is not to be explained by the race antagonism, but by the fact that the American workers in general are not organized. In those branches of industry in which Negroes work, they are accepted into the trade unions as members on a basis of equality. That is the case in the Miners Union. . . . That is the case in the building trades. There are unions which include only highly skilled workers and they do not accept Negroes. When, however, in these branches of industry, Negroes appear in large numbers and compete with the members of the union, then they will be accepted as members with equal rights. If we are against dual unions in general, we cannot be for dual Negro unions. Race prejudice exists, it is true, but the best means of struggle against it will be the acceptance of



white and black workers in one organization and not the mobilization of the Negroes on one side of the barrier and the whites on the other. We observe that work is already being done on the inclusion of the Negroes in the white unions. And if Comrade Losovsky in spite of that insists upon the organization of separate Negro unions in America, then we invite him to come to America and try to occupy himself with this question at least for a year. I am convinced that at the next Congress he would demand the head of that comrade who might propose such a solution of the Negro question."

The policy on the Negro question adopted by the present C. E. C. is totally at variance with the above opportunist policy. Nor has any comrade lost his head over dropping the above Negro policy, advocated by the Opposition when it was the C. E. C. Today we are unanimously against such opportunist policies.

(10) Perhaps the best political characterization of the present Opposition was made by Comrade Kuusinen, chairman of the American Commission appointed at the 5th Plenum of the Comintern, when he said in discussing the dispute over the Labor Party:

"In the opinion of the American Commission, the majority (today the Opposition) bases its policy in this respect (Labor Party) too much on superficial and temporary phenomena."

Though it is true that the comrades of the Opposition have made some political progress since this characterization was made, that the differences between the present Opposition and the C. E. C. are today smaller than at any previous time, yet the above characterization of the Opposition given by Comrade Kuusinen unfortunately still holds true to a great extent. One can cite numerous other instances showing the basically opportunist line that our Party followed between the 3rd and 4th National Conventions. We have so far, above, only some of the most instructive, typical and outstanding manifestations of the right-wing line followed by our Party when the present Opposition was the majority of the Central Committee.

### CHAPTER III

## FROM THE FOURTH TO THE FIFTH NATIONAL CONVENTIONS OF OUR PARTY

### THE MENACE OF OPPORTUNISM IN THE PARTY

Because of the might of American imperialism, our Party has been subject, for a number of years, to the menace of social reformism; has been faced for some time with the danger of opportunism, of right-wing policies. The committing of right errors in the Party by one leadership or by another cannot be separated from these objective conditions. Of course, the amount of political experience of

the comrades, the extent of their theoretical development, the years of connection with the labor aristocracy and bureaucracy (Foster-Dunne),<sup>1</sup> these are also factors which make a Party leadership more or less susceptible to the above-mentioned conditions which lay the objective basis for the development and growth of social reformism outside of our Party and its influence on our Party.

The fight against opportunism, against right-wing policies, first crystallized into definite shape in our Party in the fight against the present Opposition, when the latter was the majority. The leader of this fight was Comrade Ruthenberg.

An examination of some Party documents reveals this to be the unchallengeable truth. Thus we wrote in the resolution of the minority (present majority) on the report of the Central Executive Committee (present Opposition) at the Fourth National Convention, August, 1925, the following:

"The C. E. C. majority has ignored the independent unions in the trade-union work. This was corrected by the decision of the Profintern in 1924, but the decision of the Profintern has not been carried out. The failure to take actual steps for the organization of the unorganized has been another neglect of the trade-union work of the Party. The organization of the unorganized is of vital importance in influencing the revolutionizing of the organized labor movement in this country and the Party must take up this work energetically."

"The majority (present Opposition) found its greatest strength in the support of the extreme right wing of our Party, without which it could not have gained the majority in the Convention."

"The majority (present Opposition) maintains its present relationship with the right wing in the Party, without which it could not be a majority in the Party, and its policies are those of struggle against the left-wing represented by the minority group (present majority). The actions of the majority in the Convention can only lead to a new and more bitter struggle between it as the leader of the right wing of the Party and the minority (present majority), the left wing, which has shown that it is able to formulate and follow a true communist policy and lead the fight for really Bolshevizing our Party. It leaves to the minority (present majority) no other course than to continue the struggle against persecution and extermination and to keep the Party on the line of the Communist International." (See Fourth National Convention, pages 67 to 70).

This clearly establishes the fact that the change in the Party leadership, which brought about a condition whereby the 1924-25 Central Executive Committee is the Opposition and the 1924-25 minority is the Central Committee, grew out of the struggle in the Party, in which struggle the platform of the present Central Com-

<sup>1</sup>At the Sixth World Congress of the Comintern Dunne admitted he was once a member of the "labor-wing of the Democratic Party."



12 PAGES FROM PARTY HISTORY

mittee was against opportunism, against the right-wing line of the present Opposition.

LINE OF CEC FOR BOLSHEVIZATION

It was only after the Fourth National Convention that the Party began to follow consciously a line against opportunism, against Loreism, against Trotskyism, against the menace of right wingism and for a policy of Bolshevization. In the pursuit of this policy, the present leadership made numerous errors, some to the right, some to the left.

It is instructive to note that in the various attacks against the present leadership by the Opposition since the Fourth Convention of the Party, the main line has been, until very recently, that the basis of the present Central Executive Committee is ultra-left, is leftist in character. It is only in recent months, in Moscow on the eve of the Sixth Congress, that the Opposition has changed its cry. For this there are special reasons, which we will point out herein. Whatever else one may say we can at least agree that it is a fashionable Opposition, that it knows how to speculate on a specific conjecture in the Communist International. Such tactics border on the ageotage. This is the strategy of the Bourse (the stock exchange) and not strategy for the Communist Party. The Foster-Bitteman opposition has based its strategy and very life on speculating on the supposed development of sharp differences in the leadership of our Russian brother Party.

Let us examine some of the main steps toward Bolshevization, toward eradicating the menace of opportunism taken by the Party under its present leadership. Merely to enumerate, these are:

(1) The reorganization of the Party on the basis of shop and street nuclei. The abolition of the Federation system—a Party of nineteen language federations, actually nineteen Parties. The establishment of a centralized Party was an absolute prerequisite for a successful fight against opportunism.

(2) The theoretical level of our Party is still too low, but in the course of the past three years considerable headway has been made by us in the ideological advance of our Party ranks.

(3) The Party has been thrown into mass work. Today more than half our membership is in the trade unions. In 1924 only about 30 per cent was in the trade unions. Every decision of the Comintern has recognized the great headway made in mass work since the 1925 convention.

(4) *The Party has begun in earnest its campaign to organize*

*the unorganized.* In this basic task we have not restricted ourselves to propaganda, but have engaged in actual work. *The comrades will recall the struggle in the December, 1925, Plenum, by Comrades Browder and Johnstone, against the decision of the Central Committee to organize the new union in Passaic over the heads of MacMahon and other reactionary trade-union bureaucrats.*

(5) Our ranks are still far from complete unification, but great progress has already been made in this direction, as shown in the results of the present Party discussions and elections.

(6) *We have laid the beginnings of effective Negro work.* This work is still weak. It has many errors. It has shown manifestations of right wingism, but its main line and trend are in the correct communist direction.

THE PARTY'S STRUGGLE AGAINST OPPORTUNISM

(7) The Party has within the last three years, time and again, fought against opportunism, instead of tolerating or fostering it as it did under the leadership of the present Opposition. It is only the driving force of the present Central Committee, which yanked Lore and his henchmen out of our Party, which threw Salutsky into the gutter of the trade-union bureaucracy.

The Central Committee has conducted a vigorous policy against pessimism. For example, the Central Committee, despite opposition from Cannon and members of the present Opposition, severely condemned Swabeck (once Chicago District Organizer, now expelled as a Trotskyist renegade) when he said in his August, 1926, report to the Political Committee:

"A pessimistic attitude has seized the Party membership . . . generally a certain lack of faith within the Party membership in any leadership is the result . . ."

"As to the present time, when our Party can no longer live and feed upon the glory of the Russian Revolution, we must recognize more than ever that our main task is to gain working-class contact and actually become part of the lives and struggles of the American working class."

It is clear that already in 1926 there was the basis for Trotskyism in the conception of Swabeck. To him already then the proletarian victory in Russia had lost its revolutionary lustre and inspiration. To him, Swabeck, already three years ago there was an antithesis between the proletarian Russian Revolution and the development of a mass Communist Party in the United States.

And when Comrade Foster further voiced pessimism in his over-estimation of the strength of American imperialism and the power

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of the trade-union bureaucracy and labor aristocracy, the Central Committee spoke firmly and clearly. In the July, 1926, *Workers Monthly*, Comrade Foster declared in his article entitled "Trade Union Capitalism".

"Even with their present meager financial resources, which they use unscrupulously to defeat democracy in the unions, the trade-union bureaucrats are exceedingly difficult to replace. But once they get the resources of a whole series of trade-union capitalists behind them, they will become *virtually invincible*."

"The savings (workers') exist. Their total is enormous and they are full of *dynamic possibilities*." (Our emphasis).

Of course the Central Committee rejected this opportunist, pessimistic conception of the Opposition. The policy of the Party in the trade-union field has shown, especially in our various big struggles of recent date, that the above conception is dangerously false and could lead only to the most harmful results for our Party, if translated into action.

#### FIGHT AGAINST OPPORTUNIST POLICIES IN TRADE-UNION WORK

(8) The fight against the menace of right-wing policies has been conducted by the Central Committee with special vigor in the industrial work. For instance, the fight against united fronts from on top with reactionary trade-union bureaucrats. We have in mind so glaring a case as the proposal of such outstanding leaders of the Opposition as Browder and Johnstone, to the effect that the policy of the communist fraction in the International Ladies Garment Workers Union, at the end of 1925, should have been:

"To endorse the maneuver at the Convention (I. L. G. W. U.) of trying to swing the Sigman forces behind the candidacy of Hyman (left-wing candidate) for president of the I. L. G. W. U. on the basis of our forces getting a majority of the General Executive Board, and a fight for proportional representation, general amnesty (for expelled members) and as many other of our planks as possible in the left-wing program. That in the whole campaign from now on until the convention and afterwards, our comrades be instructed to carry on the sharpest criticism of Sigman, as well as Bresnauer."

Fortunately for the Party, it did not entertain such illusions about Sigman, even in 1925, as the Opposition did.

(9) For years the Opposition hammered away at the Central Executive Committee that it is in favor of dual unionism. For example, in a confidential document presented to the Comintern in 1926 by Comrades Foster and Bittelman, entitled "Weaknesses of the Present Central Executive Committee of the Workers (Com-

munist) Party in Trade Union Work," we find on page 6, the following enlightening comment:

"In the textile industry, where the workers are in a state of ferment ever repeated wage cuts, the previous C. E. C. of the Party (present Opposition) through the T. U. E. L., put into effect a policy of bringing together the many unions into united front committees for a common struggle against the employers. The present C. E. C. has diverted this movement from its proper course by turning the united front committees into dues-paying dual unions. This fake policy broke our connections with other unions in the industry. Reporting to the C. E. C. on this 'united front' dual union, Secretary Johnstone of the T. U. E. L. says:

"... Within the past two weeks, two organizers have been placed in the field to organize individual members, and the whole united front program has been completely forgotten by our people. But while we dropped the united front and cut ourselves off from the unions by organizing a new rival among the sixteen existing unions, the conservative officials took up the united front idea and are now forming a committee of the United Textile Workers, the Associated Silk Workers, the Machinists' Union, etc., while our forces are being frittered away in a dual union."

"The textile situation shows two distinct weaknesses of the Ruthenberg C. E. C. in trade-union work. The first is its misunderstanding of the united front policy and how to apply it. The second is that it is not yet free from the ultra-leftist dual unionism which dominated the revolutionary movement in the United States for 30 years. In many instances the present C. E. C. displays this sectarian dual union tendency."

We must register very clearly the fact that the painted canaries of our Opposition (as Comrade Kalbfles has very well said) are now singing a different song. We wonder whether it is only a change of cage. We know it is a change of paint. It is especially significant to note that the heaviest attack against the present C. E. C. as dual unionists came at the time of its first effort to organize a new union and over an event which later proved to be one of the best pages in the history of our Party, despite all its shortcomings and errors—the heroic organization and struggle of the Passaic textile strikers. What is more, the errors which were made in Passaic were primarily of a character against the line of the Central Committee, as criticized above by the Opposition.

#### OPPOSITION'S OPPORTUNIST LABOR PARTY POLICY

(10) Finally, we must cite a most important decision made by our Party in the labor party question. We refer to the emphatic rejection by the Central Committee of the following opportunist policy toward the labor party question proposed by Comrade Brow-



der in his document entitled "The New Orientation of the American Labor Movement and the Platform of Building a Mass Left Wing." The comrades will recall that in the December, 1925, Plenum, Comrade Browder developed a "theory" that there was growing in the ranks of the trade-union bureaucracy a two-and-a-half international tendency. In this now "historical" document, Comrade Browder said as follows:

"We must fight the Compers non-partisan policy on principle. But where trade-union non-partisan political committees have real mass support we must penetrate them and raise the slogan 'For a Labor Party.' If the trade unions, either individually or combined together as local labor parties, affiliate with such petit-bourgeois organizations as the progressive party and the various state farmer-labor parties, we should not split with them, but shall continue our agitation within them for the labor party."

Note this one-sided orientation—this orientation exclusively on the labor aristocracy. It is out of this dangerously false orientation that the Opposition developed the theory of labor party committees based exclusively on the existing trade unions, that Comrade Bittelman developed his liquidationist theory of labor party clubs with individual members. The Party can well greet the fact that all of the above opportunist conceptions on the labor party question were rejected by the Central Committee.

#### CAMPAIGNS AGAINST TROTSKYISM AND OPEN OPPORTUNISM

(11) The Party under its present leadership, has been among the first sections of the Communist International in combating deviations from the Leninist line. The American Trotskyists, Cannon, Eastman, Lore (all former members of the Foster-Bittelman opposition), have denounced the present leadership of the Party as the American banner bearer of the fight against international Trotskyism. Our Party has pursued an energetic policy in the struggle against Brandler and Thalheimer and the other right wingers and conciliators in the German Party. In the Fifth Plenum of the Comintern, the comrades representing the viewpoint now held by the majority of the Party were amongst the most aggressive in the struggle against Brandler, Thalheimer, Bubnik and the Trotskyist deviators from the Leninist line. Our Central Committee gave prompt and energetic endorsement to the struggle of the Central Committee of the C. P. S. U. against the right danger. The right wingers and the conciliators in the Communist Party of Germany, were repeatedly sharply condemned by the Central Committee.

(12) One of the strongest sources of right-wing errors, one of

the most redoubtable centers of opportunism in our Party, has been the leadership of the Finnish Federation in the days before the Fourth National Convention (1925). The Central Committee has conducted a vigorous fight against this leadership and its outright opportunist policies, despite the interference and opposition of the minority.

It is the present leadership of the Party that has destroyed politically such notorious right wingers as Askeli, Sulkunen, Boman, Alanne, Saari, Aine and Hyske, in the face of systematic resistance by the Opposition (whose leading supporters amongst the Finnish comrades have all been expelled as right wingers and Trotskyists) which was engaged in a merciless struggle against the left forces in the Finnish fraction, led by Puro and Heikkinen. There are still dangerous remnants of right wingism in the Finnish Fraction. The Central Committee is pledged to extirpate these sources of opportunism and to speed up the further Bolshevization of our Finnish Fraction.

(13) A real beginning of Bolshevik self-criticism has been made in the Party. It is no longer a question of mere admission of errors. The Central Committee tries systematically to avoid the repetition of errors through an analysis of the objective sources of the various mistakes and through taking the necessary steps to make impossible their recurrence by means of, first of all, resorting to the sharpest criticism of its own errors.

### FROM THE FIFTH TO THE SIXTH NATIONAL CONVENTION

#### CHAPTER IV

#### RIGHT ERRORS OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE SINCE THE LAST PARTY CONVENTION

Since the Fifth National Convention, the Party, under its present leadership, has made a number of serious right errors. These errors have been severely criticized by the Sixth Congress of the Communist International, which has emphasized that they cannot be attributed to the majority leadership alone. But being primarily responsible for the Central Committee, no doubt the burden of guilt for these right errors rests on the shoulders of the present leadership.

The Panken mistake was a right mistake. It grew out of a wrong estimation of the Socialist Party and its role. A similar mistake was



made in Milwaukee. In the latter instance the error was condemned and corrected by the Political Committee.

The open letter to the Socialist Party was an example of crass opportunism. It is true, the initiative in the sending of this open letter came from Comrade Bittelman, the theoretical leader of the Opposition. But the Polbureau as a whole must be blamed for it.

The underestimation of Negro work is likewise a deviation to the right. White chauvinism has been fought with energy by the Central Committee, but there has not been a sufficient systematic ideological campaign against white chauvinism and for drawing the entire Party into the Negro work.

In our fight against the imperialist war danger, we have made many right errors. The Central Committee is to be roundly condemned for permitting so full-fledged an opportunist, so hopeless a right winger, as Comrade Gomez, to be directing this work for so long a time and to make such a great variety of right-wing errors as typified by the slogan "Stop the Flow of Blood in Nicaragua," and the plea of guilty in the Washington demonstration of last Spring. The Party as a whole has not fought with enough vigor against Yankee imperialism in Latin America. The slow response of the districts to the Central Committee's call for the intensification of the activities against the imperialist war danger, shows to what extent the right danger is a menace in our Party.

The slowness of the Central Committee prior to the February Plenum, in orientating the Party towards the organization of the unorganized as the central guiding task in our trade-union work, is also a right error. This grew out of the fact that for a time, all of us underestimated the capacities and vitality of our Party in the big struggles.

These errors have been corrected in the main, since the World Congress. There are steps being taken to improve the Party's position also in the anti-imperialist work in order to complete the correction of the above mentioned mistakes.

The Central Committee is committed unqualifiedly to the line of the Sixth World Congress of the Comintern and declares that the main danger in the Comintern is the right danger. This is especially true for the United States where imperialism is still on the upgrade and where, therefore, social reformism has a broad objective basis of support. The role of the A. F. of L. and the Socialist Party in disseminating the poison of opportunism in the ranks of the labor movement, cannot be overestimated. The Party must continue a most thorough-going campaign against these agencies of

the capitalist class in the ranks of the labor movement.

We have mentioned the dominant types of right errors committed by the Central Committee since the last Party Convention. We have also committed a number of left deviations. This is particularly to be noted in the mining strike and in our election campaign locally.

#### HAS OUR PARTY GONE RIGHT OR LEFT?

In the course of the discussion, some of the Opposition comrades have repeatedly said: "Yes, the Party used to make left mistakes; the Party was once to the left. Those were the days when Comrade Ruthenberg was the leader. Ruthenberg was a leftist. But now that Ruthenberg is gone, the Party has gone to the right."

What are the facts? It is true that the Opposition has always attacked Comrade Ruthenberg as a leftist. But this attack was not leveled against Comrade Ruthenberg as an individual but against his policies. Comrade Ruthenberg was the chief formulator and the driving force in the policies of the Party. The attack of "leftist" leveled against Ruthenberg was an attack on him not as an individual person but an attack on the policies of the Party. If one were to examine or merely to recite a fraction of the attacks on the policies of Comrade Ruthenberg, on the policies of the Party in the days before the 1927 convention, he would find that we were always accused of being the left and that the Opposition seemed to be suffering congenitally from opportunism, from right-wing inclinations and tendencies.

Consequently, if one were to answer correctly the question, has the Party gone to the right or to the left since Comrade Ruthenberg's death, he would have to examine the policies of the Party since the last Party convention. To do this one must examine the policies of the Party in the principal campaigns we have had.

What were the principal campaigns of the Party since the 1927 convention? They were (1) in trade-union work, (2) in the fight against the imperialist war danger, (3) the election campaign, (4) the Negro work. Let us now proceed to examine the policies of the Party in these major campaigns and see whether these policies are to the right or to the left of the policies which we pursued before the 5th National Convention in 1927.

In the trade-union work, the Party has moved considerably to the left. No one would today dare propose the previous platform of the Opposition for trade-union work—to fight in an unprincipled manner for capture of offices in the trade unions. No one would today think of proposing amalgamation as the cure-all slogan. None of



us today confuses the labor aristocracy with the whole working class. Today the center of gravity in our industrial work is amongst the unorganized, the unskilled and semi-skilled, the decisive section of the American proletariat. Compared with our trade-union work and policies of today, our activities and policies before the 5th National Convention were far to the right.

In the campaign against the war danger, our Party has moved considerably to the left. The slogan of partial disarmament which was the red, or shall we say the yellow, thread of our 1924-26 election programs has been very properly discarded and thrown on the junk heap. The Party's anti-war program is a truly Bolshevik program.

It would be folly even to attempt a comparison between the 1928 election campaign and that of 1924. In 1924 our election campaign was outright opportunist. The election platform spoke even of workers' control of production, one of the pillar slogans of Brandler, Thalheimer & Company. This was the program which all of us followed in 1924. The 1928 election platform is a communist platform in the best sense of the word. In our 1928 election campaign we committed a number of errors, some right and some left and some stupid. But in the main it was a communist campaign.

Finally, regarding the Negro question. Our policy, with the help of the C. I. is a communist policy in Negro work. No one in our Party today would propose even for consideration the 1924 Negro policy of our Party. Here we have gone considerably to the left. Here we now have a correct communist approach and policy.

It is obvious that the talk on the part of some comrades of the Opposition that "something has happened" in our Party (Bittelman at the Anglo-American Secretariat during the 6th World Congress) is just that much balderdash; it is just nonsense. It is true something has happened in our Party. The Party has gone very much to the left since the present Central Committee assumed leadership. The going of the Party to the left proceeded at an accelerated pace since the 1927 convention. When we speak of right and left, we do not speak mechanically. We do not speak geographically. We are not emotional about it. We speak of right and left in a Leninist sense. Today the Party has far more correct policies; is far more a Communist Party; is far more on the road towards Bolshevization than it has ever been before. And what is most important is that this

direction, this development, is a conscious policy of not only the leadership of the Party, but what is most welcome, of the overwhelming majority of the membership of the Party.

#### SOME RECENT RIGHT ERRORS OF THE OPPOSITION

We have seen that the Opposition gave the Party a right-wing leadership when it was the majority of the C. E. C. We have seen that the present leadership in the Party was born primarily as a result of its fight against this right-wing leadership personified in the 1924 political trio of Cannon, Bittelman, Lore. We have emphasized that Comrades Foster and Bittelman have advanced towards a correct communist political line, since the expulsion of Cannon and Lore from the Party. At the same time it becomes especially necessary to point out at this time the persistent making of right errors by our Opposition since it is now yelling that it is the discoverer of the right danger in the American Party and that it is the left of the Party.

The writer maintains that all this talk by the Opposition of the CEC being a right-wing committee is just that much smoke-screen of the Opposition to hide its own opportunist inclinations. We will cite here a number of right-wing errors committed by the Opposition within recent months only—all of which errors have not crept into the Party policy because, fortunately for the Party, the Opposition was in the minority.

1.—Comrades Bittelman and Foster opposed the proposal to endorse Panken conditionally. In this they were correct. Instead, these comrades proposed that the Central Committee of the Party should offer a united front to the Socialist Party locally. In other words, instead of a conditional endorsement of Panken, our comrades of the Opposition even went further to the right and fostered the illusion that our Party could have a common program with the Socialist Party for the municipal ticket as a whole in New York City in 1927. Instead of endorsing conditionally one Socialist Party candidate our Opposition proposed a flat endorsement of about thirty S. P. candidates. This error showed itself in the following proposal of Comrade Foster, in the Polcom meeting of October 27, 1927:

"That the policy of the New York DEC in giving qualified support to Panken (the Socialist Party candidate for judge) was incorrect. *The Party should have approached the S. P. with general proposals for the establishment of a united front labor ticket in the New York elections, based on a minimum program.*" (Our emphasis).



## SOME OF COMRADE BITTELMAN'S "CONTRIBUTIONS"

2.—This opportunistic attitude towards the Socialist Party was continued by the Opposition even after the Central Committee had corrected its Panken error, even after the receipt of the April 18th letter of the Comintern Political Secretariat criticizing our Party for sending the open letter to the Socialist Party. Notice the following incident. The Philadelphia District Committee proposed the sending of an open letter to the Socialist Party and to the socialist officials of Reading, Pa. It sent this draft letter to the Agitprop Dept. for approval and correction. Comrade Bittelman took charge of the matter as representative of the Agitprop Dept. Instead of correcting the error of the Philadelphia comrades, Comrade Bittelman aggravated this right-wing error by his own right "improvements." For instance, Comrade Bittelman himself wrote the following sentences into the draft letter of the Philadelphia comrades, who later corrected their error. Wrote Comrade Bittelman:

"The November elections, which resulted in placing the Socialist Party and a number of its most prominent leaders in control of the administration of the city of Reading, afford you (the S. P. government officials) an opportunity to ORGANIZE AND INSPIRE THE WORKERS FOR STRUGGLE AGAINST THE EMPLOYERS' OFFENSIVE." (Bittelman addition in capitals.)

This opportunist gem went on to state:

"Despite your failure up to the present to meet and deal with these issues we SUGGEST that you MUST yet, while it is not too late, prove by energetic action along this line that you have not altogether abandoned the principles of class struggle which you professed at one time, that you will discontinue your present policies which, WHETHER YOU WANT IT OR NOT, SERVE THE INTERESTS OF THE CAPITALISTS, and work vigorously and consistently in the furtherance of the real needs of the working class."

No comment is necessary on the above right-wing conception of the Socialist Party as worsened by Comrade Bittelman. But let us close with the conclusion Comrade Bittelman reached in this letter which he approved for sending to the city government officials of the Socialist Party:

"We consider it our duty in behalf of the workers whom we represent to give you every cooperation in the carrying out of this program, if you will undertake to do so."

Then Comrade Bittelman, to make sure that his opportunist line reaches and poisons the maximum number of workers possible,

wrote the following foot-note as an instruction to the Philadelphia comrades:

"The value of this document will be exactly nil if the sending is not followed up with a wide distribution of it among the masses. . . ."

Comrades might ask where Comrade Bittelman gets the audacity to call any other comrade in the Party a right winger after such a masterly contribution to the crassest opportunism that our Party has faced for some time. Comrade Bittelman has not yet corrected this typical opportunist error of his. At the May, 1928 Plenum he refused point blank to correct himself.

3.—It is known throughout the Party that Comrade Foster was against instructing the communist fraction in the National Miners' Union fighting for a policy of having a plain, unequivocal endorsement of the class struggle in the constitution of the organization. Later on, of course, under pressure of the Central Committee, Comrade Foster himself corrected this right-wing error.

4.—In the course of the mining struggle, when the left wing was assuming real strength, when the ground was being prepared for the organization of a national miners' union, Comrade Bittelman came forward with a policy of total capitulation before the extreme difficulties at hand. Comrade Bittelman proposed that the left wing should take the initiative in calling off the mine strike which was called and sabotaged by Lewis. Comrade Foster, (this was in the days prior to the present faction fight) denounced this proposal by Comrade Bittelman as a strikebreaking measure.

5.—In the course of the mining campaign, Comrade Wagenknecht, who now yells from the house-tops with the full wind of his right and left lungs that he is a left winger, resisted determinedly the building of the Party units in the Western Pennsylvania coal fields during the strike.

6.—This same internationally renowned foe of opportunism, Comrade Wagenknecht, very recently proposed that the communists should be the tail to the liberal kite in the proposed Mooney campaign! And a little while before this self-styled "left of the left" communists called upon striking textile workers to join with him in yelling "Three cheers for the Jewish Daily Forward," the vicious anti-working class organ of the American Socialist Party.

7.—As the recently appointed head of the Anti-Imperialist Department, Comrade Bittelman has made a number of serious right errors which were corrected by the Central Committee. We need



but cite his slogan "No More New Cruisers." This proposal of partial disarmament is a petit-bourgeois pacifist error which the Plenums and Congresses of the Communist International and Young Communist International have repeatedly condemned. During the strike of the fruit workers in Colombia, Comrade Bittelman threw out the utterly opportunist slogan that the struggle of these workers who were brutally murdered by Wall Street's puppet government of Colombia, was a struggle for the defense of the law of the land.

#### OTHER RIGHT ERRORS OF THE OPPOSITION

8.—Only a few weeks ago two prominent supporters of the Opposition in the New York District, Comrades Lewitt and Seligman, were co-signers of a statement issued by Brookwood, denouncing the communist movement and kowtowing to the American Federation of Labor bureaucracy. This outright dangerous right wingism was condemned by the Polbureau.

9.—In the Minnesota District, supporters of the Opposition have systematically resisted the Party's policy of fighting Shipstead as a betrayer and destroyer of the labor party movement. In this district, individuals like Vincent Dunne, Skoglund, Hedlund, Coover, have systematically placed Farmer-Labor Party discipline as against and above Party discipline. These individuals have since been expelled from the Party as Trotskyists. Though these erstwhile supporters of the Opposition have refused to fight Shipstead in the past, they are now vigorously fighting the Party.

10.—The Opposition has not only been tolerant and conciliatory towards right-wing mistakes but has even rendered protection to comrades committing right-wing errors and has been very slow in taking measures against elements within their own ranks deviating from the correct Leninist line either openly to the right or as in the case of Trotskyism, when such deviations were camouflaged with left phrases. We can cite the following three typical instances to show the correctness of our conclusion.

- a) The consistent protection given to the right wing in the Finnish Fraction (Sulkanen, Askeli, Aine, etc.) who have now united with Fascist against the Party.
- b) The resistance by the Opposition in the Polbureau to the proposals for censuring the Minnesota right wingers on the Labor Party Shipstead question.
- c) The extreme slowness with which the Opposition reacted to

the development of the Cannon-Trotsky outbreak in its own ranks. It must be stated here that recently the Opposition admitted its error on this question of its slowness in bringing the Cannon-Trotsky development before the Party.

That is why it is no accident that throughout the Party discussion and particularly the membership meetings, the representatives of the Opposition were so pessimistic and were so active in minimizing the Party's achievements which the Comintern has always emphasized. It would not be an exaggeration to state that all of the Opposition representatives put together at the membership meetings did not spend a total of one half hour in discussing the Party achievements.

Nor is it an accident that the Opposition has developed a whole system of reservations to political decisions of the Communist International. The bible of the Opposition in its policy of reservations to Comintern decisions is still the declaration of reservations made by Comrade Johnstone at the Sixth World Congress. At this time declarations by Comrade Johnstone take on special importance in view of the article by Comrades Browder and Zack in which the Opposition leadership is mentioned in the following order of importance: Bittelman, Johnstone, Foster, Zack, Browder and Dunne.

#### CHAPTER V

#### A CORRECT ESTIMATE OF THE OPPOSITION

The Opposition is the main, but not the only source of right errors in our Party. It is the principal source of the right danger in our Party. The Opposition has given birth to the most notorious opportunists, to the worst incurable right wingers and opponents of the Comintern line in America. Let us cite some of the most outstanding opportunist, right-wing figures in the history of our Party. They have all been sworn enemies of the present Central Committee.

First, comes the infamous Salusky, than whom there is no more bitter and desperate opponent of the present leadership of our Party and of the Communist International. He was expelled from our Party through the initiative of the present leadership against the opposition of Cannon and his associates.

Secondly, we have the veteran right winger, Ludwig Lore. Even in the old Socialist Party many of us have had numerous conflicts with him as an opponent of the genuine left forces. He was once an integral part of the Opposition leadership.

Thirdly, Eastman, the notorious enemy of Marxism, was brought



into our Party by Cannon and was expelled for his Trotskyist activities only after the present majority took the leadership.

Fourthly, the whole Cannon-Trotsky group is an off-spring of the Opposition, particularly in its present fight against the Central Committee as a right wing. Not a single one of the District "heroes" of the Trotsky group is a supporter of the Central Committee. Without exception we find as Trotskyists throughout the country, such elements as Dr. Konikow in Boston, Cannon in New York, Morgenstern in Philadelphia, Brahin in Cleveland, Mass and Reynolds in Detroit, Swabeck and Giganti in Chicago, Vincent Dunne and Skoglund, etc., in Minneapolis, Buchler and Allard in Kansas, Carlson in Seattle, etc.,—all supporters of the Opposition, all opponents of the Central Committee.

Fifthly, Askeli, Sulkanen and company, who have been thrown out by the Central Committee from the leadership of the Finnish Fraction, have been and continue to be staunch supporters of the present Opposition. These individuals are plain social democrats and are now working openly hand in glove with the Finnish social democrats against the Party.

Sixthly, and last but not least, in order to have a clear estimate of the dangerous opportunist inclinations of our Opposition it must be said that the one district which is reeking with opportunism and which has been guilty of more and worse right-wing errors, than any other three districts combined, is the California District, led exclusively by Opposition supporters. The leadership of the California District, repudiated by the last California District Convention, which has rebelled against the right-wing policy, has yet to learn the most elementary concepts of discipline in a Communist Party.

#### AN INSTRUCTIVE ROLL CALL

Political stability and a sense of communist responsibility are essential prerequisites for leadership in a Communist Party. On this basis, it is very instructive to examine what has happened to the personnel of the Central Committee members, candidates and alternates as elected in 1925 and 1927. Of the nineteen Opposition Central Committee members and alternates in 1925, we find the following casualties: 1.—Abern, expelled from the Party. 2.—Cannon, expelled from the Party. 3.—Reynolds, suspended from the Party and under consideration for expulsion as a Trotskyite. 4.—Schachtman, expelled from the Party. 5.—Manley, left the Party before his death. 6.—Swabeck, expelled from the Party. 7.—Sullivan, disappeared from the Party and expelled. 8.—

O'Flaherty, expelled from the Party. 9.—Loeb, left the Party and joined a business organization and is now affiliated with a Fascist Jewish Business Men's Association in Chicago.

Nearly the entire 1924 National Executive Committee of the Young Workers League, which was overwhelmingly supporting the Opposition, is now outside the Party. With the exception of Williamson and Salzman, all the Opposition members of this NEC have either left the Party or been expelled from the Party for Trotskyism, violation of Party discipline or some other such act against the Party.

Of this Central Committee, the present majority lost the leader of the Party, Comrade Ruthenberg, through death. This was the heaviest loss our Party has suffered to date. The above mentioned "losses" by the Opposition, were, of course, gains for the Party.

Of the Central Committee elected at the 1927 Convention, the Opposition had the following casualties: 1.—Abern, expelled from the Party. 2.—Cannon, expelled from the Party. 3.—Swabeck, expelled from the Party. 4.—Reynolds, suspended from the Party. 5.—Schachtman, expelled from the Party. At the same time every member of the majority of the 1927 Central Committee has continued at his post carrying out the Party duties and responsibilities.

But today there is no consolidated right-wing group in our Party. It is true the Opposition has given birth to the whole galaxy of opportunists herein enumerated. It was a painful birth indeed, but with the help of the Central Committee and the Comintern, the Opposition fortunately got rid of these opportunist forces and is now in a position to work in greater political harmony with the majority of the Central Committee and to become an organic part of the Party's leadership.

The Party membership has spoken and spoken more decisively than ever. The Comintern has given guidance to the Party, through the decisions of the Sixth World Congress and the subsequent decisions of the Political Secretariat and Presidium. The Opposition must now drop its ridiculous notions of superimposing upon the Party as a nucleus for leadership, the six cylinder combination arranged by Browder and Zack themselves in the order of leadership as Bittelman, Johnstone, Foster, Zack, Browder and Dunne. The Party Convention which will be genuinely proletarian in character and which will consist of the best representatives of the Party and its struggles will select the incoming Central Executive Committee on the basis of correct communist policy, Party responsibility and



capacity. The decision of the Convention will be binding for every Party member. Every Party member must unreservedly accept the decision of the Sixth World Congress of the Comintern to the effect that we must have iron discipline in our ranks, that the minority must absolutely subordinate itself to the majority.

## CHAPTER VI

## THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL AND ITS AMERICAN SECTION

In no other Party discussion that we have had to date, has the role of the Communist International, has the relationship of the Communist International to its American section, received so much attention as in the present one. This is due to a multitude of reasons. One of the main causes is the fact that in this discussion, considerable time was spent on the examination of fundamental problems.

In no previous discussion was the question of the general trend of American imperialism, whether it is still ascending or descending, put so sharply. The same applies to the question of the estimate by the Communist International of the Central Committee. It is in this sense that the maintenance of reservations to Comintern decisions played so important a part in the Party discussion. That is why the emphatic reservations to the decisions of the Sixth World Congress on the United States, as made by Comrade Johnstone in his declaration in behalf of the Opposition, assumes so much importance.

What has been the line of the Communist International towards the American Party? The Comintern has time and again criticized our Party, corrected its shortcomings, cleared up certain political misconceptions, set the Party straight in the trade-union field, brought pressure to bear for reorganization of the Party along Leninist lines, etc. This is the duty of the Communist International. The Communist International represents the collective, centralized communist will, based on the experiences, capacities and composite qualities of what is best in all its sections, in the various Parties.

The Communist International is the world Communist Party, with every one of its sections an organic part. Hence, the Communist International generally deals with basic problems confronting the various sections. It is very seldom that the Executive Com-

mittee of the Communist International deals with smaller inner Party matters. The Communist International deals with the main line and guides carefully these political lines of the various sections. An examination of the attitude of the Communist International towards the American Party reveals that since 1923, the Comintern has consistently supported the main political line of the present leadership. Without going into details, the writer proposes to cite the decisive sections of the various Comintern decisions.

## OPEN LETTER OF ECCI TO PARTY'S THIRD CONVENTION, 1923

In the open letter from the Executive Committee of the Communist International to the Third National Convention of our Party, the Comintern declared, on December 7, 1923:

"The excellent work that has been done by the communists in the left wing of the labor movement in the United States, demonstrates that if all the comrades were members of the trade unions, the work would increase manifold....

"The propaganda that the Workers Party has conducted during the past year has been most effective. As a result, the ideas of communism and the communist movement are the center of discussion both among the workers and the capitalists....

"The vast sentiment for communism that the Workers Party has aroused, must be organized. Your Central Executive Committee acted right in inaugurating a campaign for membership....

"The Workers Party has applied communist tactics correctly in seeking a united front of all forces to fight the capitalist system in the United States. It has sought a united front not only on the economic but particularly on the political field....

"The organization of the Federated Farmer Labor Party was an achievement of primary importance."

This was an estimate of the Party's work prior to the Third National Convention, when the kernel of the present leadership was the basis of the then Party leadership.

## COMINTERN FIFTH PLENUM ON AMERICAN SITUATION

At the Fifth Plenum of the Communist International the American question received considerable notice. In estimating the differences between the present majority and the present Opposition, the Comintern Plenum Commission on the American question declared:

"The minority of the Central Executive Committee (present majority) of the Workers Party was right in having confidence in the vitality and future



of the labor party movement. 'The Workers Party must now do its utmost to further this movement.'

And Comrade Kuusinen, chairman of the Commission, declared as follows:

"In the opinion of the American Commission, the majority (present Opposition) based its policy in this respect (Labor Party) too much on superficial, temporary, phenomena. The minority (present majority) is absolutely right in its confidence in the vitality of the labor party movement.

The Resolution on the American question, adopted by the Fifth Plenum, further made the following declaration relative to Lore, who at that time was a member of the Central Committee, member of the majority group of the Central Committee (present Opposition):

"Lore represents a non-communist tendency of the Workers Party. Already the decision of the ECCI of May, 1924, pointed out that Lore's ideology was the ideology of the second and a half international. Lore supported Levi against the Comintern. . . . He fought against the necessary centralism of the Party in the name of the autonomy of the German Federation. The ideological struggle against Lore's tendency is essential for the Party. The ECCI proposes to the Workers Party to come to a definite decision on the Lore question at its next Congress. In any case, the Executive is of the opinion that the Central Committee of the Party is not the place for such an opportunist as Lore."

In this light, it is very important to note that on December 4, 1924, Fabie Burman, executive secretary of the Finnish Federation at that time, transmitted a long tirade to all Finnish branches against the then minority (present majority) and in behalf of the then majority (present Opposition) reading in part:

"The Central Committee majority (present Opposition) is composed of Comrades Foster, Cannon, Abern and the undersigned. Comrade Lore has been of slightly different opinion but has nearly without exception voted with the majority (present Opposition)."

The comrades might say: what is the use of going into all this history of the Party? First of all, it is time that we did examine the history of the Party a little. Secondly, as has already been emphasized, the Comintern decisions, the Comintern attitude, the Comintern line and resolutions on the American question are no accidents. You cannot separate the Comintern's decision of one year from that of the previous year. Nor of the previous year from the one preceding it. There is decisive continuity in the Comintern policies and attitudes. This continuity is clearly noticeable in the Comintern line towards the American Party.

#### FROM THE SIXTH AND SEVENTH PLENUMS OF THE ECCI.

And in the decision on the American Party question and the present Party leadership, made at the Sixth Plenum of the Comintern, in March, 1926, we find the following:

"The Enlarged Executive calls for all members of the Party to support the Central Executive Committee, which in the short time of its existence, has already succeeded in achieving substantial successes in the unification of the Party. The Central Executive Committee has centralized, through energetic Party reorganization, the Party, which up to recently, was divided into eighteen language sections. The Party press also shows decided ideological improvement. The Enlarged Executive finds correct the basic line on the trade-union resolution adopted unanimously by both tendencies at the last Convention of the Workers (Communist) Party. The Enlarged Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Comintern declares that the complete and unconditional abandonment of the factional struggle is a demand of the Comintern and that everyone who violates this demand must reckon on the most serious consequences for himself."

This estimate by the Comintern of the present Central Committee only a few months after it assumed the leadership of the Party, certainly does not look like lack of confidence.

And at the Seventh Plenum, at the close of 1926, the Communist International estimated the Party's work under the leadership of the Central Committee, in the following way:

"In spite of enormous difficulties, the Workers (Communist) Party has achieved considerable successes in the sphere of mass work. It has led a number of strikes, has made serious attempts to organize the unorganized, has penetrated into the miners' union. It must also be placed on record that the Party has undergone an internal consolidation as a result of the considerable diminution of factional struggles. These create the promise for further growth of the influence of the Party among the masses."

At the same time, the Organization Department of the Executive Committee of the Comintern estimated the Party's reorganization as follows:

"Through the reorganization of the Party on the basis of factory and street nuclei, the necessary organizational premises for a real Communist Party have been created. . . . Despite the great difficulties which were even greater in the United States than in other countries. . . . The reorganization has been a great achievement for the Party."

The continuity of the Comintern's line towards the American Party and its leadership, is shown in the following decision arrived at by the American Commission of the Eighth Plenum, in its resolution adopted by the Presidium:



## THE DECISION OF THE EIGHTH PLENUM AND THE SUPPLEMENTARY DECISION

"The Presidium recognizes that despite great objective difficulties the Party has recently made important progress in many fields of activities.

"In the trade-union field the Party has achieved quite a number of successes, expressed in the increasing influence of the left wing in important unions (miners' union and needle trades) and initiated and led big strikes. The increasing influence of the Party has called forth an offensive of the corrupt trade-union bureaucracy, as a result of which there are made far reaching demands on the tacticaladroitness of the leadership in the Communist Party."

This resolution was followed by a supplementary decision of the Presidium of the Executive Committee of the Communist International adopted July 7, 1927:

"The Comintern is categorically against the sharpening of the factional struggle and under no circumstances supports the statement of the 'National Committee of the Opposition Bloc.' The Comintern recognizes that in many political questions the Ruthenberg group followed a more correct line in the past than the Foster group. On the other hand, the Executive is of the opinion that the Ruthenberg group had not understood how to estimate sufficiently the full significance of the trade-union forces in the Party and that Foster at that time was more correct on many trade-union questions.

"The line of the Comintern has been: On the whole, for the political support of the Ruthenberg group and for bringing Foster nearer to the general political line of the Ruthenberg group, at the same time, however, following the course towards the correction of the trade-union tactic of the Ruthenberg group on the line of Foster through cooperation in the Party leadership. Now the previous political and trade-union differences have almost disappeared. The Comintern condemns most categorically every attempt towards the sharpening of the situation in the Party, especially in the present objective situation as exemplified by the formation of a National Committee of the Opposition Bloc. The Comintern considers factionalism without political differences as the worst offense against the Party."

## FROM THE NINTH PLENUM TO THE SIXTH CONGRESS

Immediately after the Ninth Plenum, the Political Secretariat of the Communist International, in a letter to the American Party, on April 18, 1928, declared in part as follows:

"Amid an atmosphere of growing deep depression developing towards crisis and more acute and aggressive policy on the part of American imperialism at home and abroad, the Workers Party, which has already played a leading role in the struggles and was able also to take prominent part in the miners' struggle in Colorado, has now as its major task to mobilize and organize the workers under its banner against the capitalist offensive and against the reformist supporters of capitalism, namely, the American Federation of Labor and the Socialist Party of America."

Obviously while our Opposition has no confidence in the Central Committee, the Comintern, though criticizing the errors and shortcomings of the Central Committee and giving it correct political guidance, has continually expressed confidence in the main line of the Party as formulated and applied by the present leadership.

And in the theses on "The International Situation and the Tasks of the Communist International," presented to the Sixth World Congress on behalf of the Russian delegation, we find the following characterization of the American Party:

"The Workers (Communist) Party of America has displayed more lively activity and has taken advantage of symptoms of crisis in American industry, the growth of unemployment (due to the extremely rapid rise in the organic composition of capital and in the technique of production). A number of stubborn and fierce class battles (primarily the miners' strike) found in the Communist Party a stalwart leader. The campaign against the execution of Sacco and Vanzetti was also conducted under the leadership of the Party, within which is observed a weakening of the long-standing factional struggle. While recording successes, however, reference must be made to a number of right mistakes committed in regard to the Socialist Party, to the fact that the Party has not with sufficient energy conducted the organization of the unorganized and for the organization of the Negro movement, and that it does not conduct a sufficiently strong struggle against the predatory policy of the United States in Latin America. These mistakes, however, cannot be ascribed to the majority leadership alone.

"On the question of organizing a Labor Party, the Congress resolves: That the Party concentrates on the work in the trade unions, on organizing the unorganized, etc., and in this way lay the basis for the practical realization of the slogan of a broad Labor Party organized from below.

"The most important task that confronts the Party is to put an end to the factional strife which is not based on any serious differences on principles and at the same time to increase the recruiting of workers into the Party and to lend a decided impetus in the direction of promoting workers to leading posts in the Party."

All other decisions of the Comintern subsequent to the Sixth Congress, have been made on the basis of the line of the Sixth World Congress towards the American Party, which line is the basic, guiding point of the Comintern policy towards its American section.

## CHAPTER VII

## THE AMERICAN PARTY AND THE SIXTH WORLD CONGRESS

The Central Committee, the Party as a whole, the overwhelming majority of the membership, have taken the decisions of the Sixth



World Congress of the Communist International in earnest. The fight against the right danger has been transformed by the Central Committee from a struggle against right errors here and there to a systematic energetic ideological and organizational campaign against the right danger as the main danger in our Party. Already the Central Committee has, practically speaking, eradicated the occurrence of wrong policies, of opportunist reactions, to the Socialist Party. The fight against the trade-union bureaucracy, against the American Federation of Labor, has been sharpened considerably. The errors in anti-imperialist work, in Negro work, have also been corrected in large part.

The question of a proletarianization of the Party's leadership and its ranks, has been met with the most welcome determination on the part of the membership and Party leadership in a most serious effort to execute the line of the Sixth World Congress of the Comintern.

The same holds true in a lesser measure for the Party's campaign against the imperialist war danger. Here there is very much more to be done in order to come up to the mark set for us by the criticism and evaluation by the Sixth World Congress.

#### PROGRESS IN ELIMINATION OF FACTIONALISM

The elimination of factionalism, the ending of the faction struggle, for which there is no serious basis in principle today, has also made considerable headway since the World Congress. Notice the overwhelming support the Central Committee has in the membership. Even if the Opposition should decide, as there are some signs of some of its followers doing, to continue on its part factional struggle after the convention, to flout the convention decisions, to violate the decision of the World Congress to the effect that the minority must absolutely subordinate itself to the majority, it will find its factional hands paralyzed.

The Party, particularly after the convention, will not brook the slightest factional act on the part of anyone in our ranks. The convention will deal a death-blow to factionalism. Those of the Opposition comrades, particularly some of those enumerated by Comrade Browder in his article of January 29th, as the "nucleus of the American Party leadership," had better now indelibly imprint upon their minds that the National Convention will speak in decisive terms against factional manipulations, factional campaigns—underground or overground. The incoming Central Executive Committee will be guided by the decisions of the convention.

This is the determination of the Communist International. We must put an end to factionalism. We must liquidate all the groupings in the Party. We must abolish the factions. In the closing remarks of the writer at the last Party Plenum, there was made to the comrades of the Opposition, a genuine, a sincere, offer for unity. This offer has since then been repeated by the Political Committee several times. This offer is repeated herein. We do not invite the comrades of the Opposition to join the majority. We do invite the comrades of the Opposition who are ready to accept the Comintern decisions without reservations, who are not waiting for changes in the line of the Comintern six months from now or three months from today, who are not basing their policies for the United States on divisions within the ranks of the leadership of any other section of the Comintern, or in the Executive Committee of the Comintern itself, to join with us, to help create a new majority in the Party; a more composite and more representative majority—a Central Committee which will have even more support in the Party than the present one has.

In the light of the brief historical review of our Party's development and growth, from the angle of the Comintern's consistent line towards the American Party, its problems, its tasks, its errors, its shortcomings, and its leadership, one can clearly see that our Party is today more prepared than hitherto to carry out successfully two of the main tasks before us; one, the fight against the right danger; two, the liquidation of factionalism and the abolition of all factions and groups.

The unification of the Party is near completion. The Party will develop with greater speed towards a mass Communist Party.

Since the 1927 convention, our Party has acted ever more frequently as the ideological leader of basic sections of the American proletariat and has increased its influence among the native workers. We have had real achievements in the furriers and garment workers' strike, Passaic, in the miners' struggle, the struggle in Colorado, the textile workers' strikes in New Bedford, Fall River and Paterson. This is only a partial list of the battles in which our Party has "for the first time appeared in the role of a Party of political action, capable of linking up the economic struggles of the proletariat and its political aims."

We may add that "the struggle for the organization of new unions which the Party had to carry on under circumstances of raging terror on the part of the avaricious bosses, of the powerful



trusts, and the American Federation of Labor, is one of the best pages in the history of the work of the Party during the last year."

But we must emphasize, however, that "the Party is now making only its first steps in the new path. It is now only in the turning point between the old and the new. It has not yet passed the turning point."

With united ranks and under the leadership of the Communist International, in a spirit of true Bolshevik self-criticism, we will speed up our progress towards becoming the decisive political force in the country, the Party of the victorious American proletariat.

THE END





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